

# THE Christian History;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival  
of Religion in *England Scotland and America.*

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To be publish'd *Weekly.*

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**W**E might no doubt produce more *Instances* of the  
REVIVAL of Religion in some *other Parts* of  
NEW ENGLAND in this long Season of general  
and growing Decay; had we Time to look over a great Num-  
ber of *Manuscript original Letters* now in the Hands of the  
Rev. Mr. Prince; which were writtten from *Ministers* and  
*others* in almost all Parts of the *Latid* during the Course of  
those *sixty Years*, which pass'd from 1660 to 1720. The Sub-  
stance of many of which Letters, i. e. those of a *religious* and  
*historical* Nature, may be hereafter in proper Seasons publish-  
ed. And if *this Paper* continues, and the ALMIGHTY will  
graciously please to help us; we hope to make it a *Magazine*  
or *Treasury* of the *most pious* Parts of our *new English History*  
from the Beginning:

But the *Instances above* may suffice at present to illustrate  
our Ist general Head, of *some transient Revivals* of Religion in  
some *particular Places* of NEW ENGLAND in the Midst of  
*those Decays.* We now go on to our

II General Head, which is to give an *Account* of the *more*  
*surprizing* and *more extensive* REVIVALS of it, in the *present*  
*Day.*

And this we shall divide into these *two Parts*, (1) The  
*remarkable Revival* in this Country before Mr. *Whitefield's*  
*Arrival* hither. (2) The *further Progress* of this Revival  
since.

I. The remarkable Revival in this Country before Mr.  
*Whitefield's* Arrival hither in *Sept. 1740.*

In the Night after the Lord's Day, *October 29. 1727.* there was a *general and amazing EARTHQUAKE* throughout *New England & the neighbouring Provinces*; which with several *repeated Shocks* afterwards in divers Parts of the *Land*, was a Means of *awakening many* to serious Thoughts of God and Eternity, and of reviving Religion among us; which we shall give in the Words of the Rev. Dr. *Sewall*, and Mr. *Prince*, *Webb* and *Cooper* of *Boston*, in their Preface to the 3d Edition of Mr. *Edward's* Narrative. Mentioning some remarkable *Effusions* of the SPIRIT of CHRIST in *other Ages and Parts* of the World; they go on as follows,

‘ Nor have we in these remote *Corners* of the *Earth*, where  
 ‘ *Satan* had his Seat from Time immemorial, been left with-  
 ‘ out a *Witness* of the *divine Power and Grace*.

‘ Yea, we need look no higher than *our own Times*, to find  
 ‘ abundant Occasion to celebrate the *wonderful Works* of God.  
 ‘ Thus when God arose and shook the *Earth*, his *loud Call*  
 ‘ to us in that amazing Providence was follow'd, so far as  
 ‘ Man can judge, with the *still Voice* of his SPIRIT, in which  
 ‘ he was present to *awaken* many and bring them to say  
 ‘ trembling, *What must we do to be saved?* Yea, as we hope,  
 ‘ to *turn not a few* from Sin to God in a *thorough Conversion*.  
 ‘ But when the Bitterness of Death was past, much the great-  
 ‘ er Part of those whom God's Terrors affrighted, gave sad  
 ‘ Occasion to remember those Words, Psalm 78. 34,--- 36.  
 ‘ *When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned*  
 ‘ *and enquired early after God. And they remembered that God*  
 ‘ *was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Never-*  
 ‘ *theless, they did flatter him with their Mouths, and they lied*  
 ‘ *unto him with their Tongues.* And there has since been great  
 ‘ Reason to complain of our speedy Return to our former  
 ‘ Sins, notwithstanding some *Hopes* given of a *more general*  
 ‘ *Reformation.*’

But a *more remarkable Revival of Religion* in *this Country* follows in a Time of great Security; when there was *no terrible Dispensation of Providence* to awaken the Minds of Men, in the Years 1734, 35, and 36. An Account of this is given in a printed Treatise entituled, *A faithful NARRATIVE of the surprizing Work of GOD in the Conversion of many hundred Souls in Northampton, and the neighbouring Towns and Villages of the County of Hampshire in the Province of the MASSACHUSETTS, &c. in a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Benja.*

Colman

Colman of Boston, written by the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Edwards Minister of Northampton, Nov. 6. 1736, with an Attestation from some of the Rev. Ministers of Hampshire, &c.

Out of which we shall only select these three or four Leaves.

[ *Revival of Religion at NORTHAMPTON.* ]

‘ Just after my Gaandfather’s Death, it seemed to be a  
 ‘ time of extraordinary *Dulness* in Religion: *Licentiousness*  
 ‘ for some Years greatly prevailed among the *Youth* of the  
 ‘ Town; they were many of them very much addicted to  
 ‘ *Night-walking*, and frequenting the *Tavern*, and *leud* Prac-  
 ‘ tices, wherein some, by their Example exceedingly cor-  
 ‘ rupted others. It was their Manner very frequently to get  
 ‘ together, in Conventions of both *Sexes*, for Mirth and Jol-  
 ‘ lity, which they called *Frolicks*; and they would often  
 ‘ spend the greater part of the *Night* in them, without regard  
 ‘ to any *Order* in the Families they belonged to: and indeed  
 ‘ *Family-Government* did too much fail in the Town. It was  
 ‘ become very customary with many of our young People, to  
 ‘ be *Indecent* in their Carriage at *Meeting*, which doubtless,  
 ‘ would not have prevailed to such a Degree, had it not been  
 ‘ that my *Grandfather* through his *great Age*, ( tho’ he retain-  
 ‘ ed his *Powers* surprizingly to the *last* ) was not so able  
 ‘ to *Observe* them. There had also long prevailed in the  
 ‘ Town, a Spirit of Contention between *two Parties*, into  
 ‘ which they had for many Years been *divided*, by which,  
 ‘ was maintain’d a *Jealousy* one of the other, and they were  
 ‘ prepared to *oppose* one another in all publick Affairs.

‘ But in *two* or *three* Years after Mr. *Stoddard’s* Death,  
 ‘ there began to be a sensible Amendment of these Evils; the  
 ‘ *young People* shew’d more of a Disposition to hearken to  
 ‘ Counsel, and by degrees left off their *Frolicking*, and grew  
 ‘ observably more *Decent* in their Attendance on the publick  
 ‘ Worship, and there were more that manifested a *Religious*  
 ‘ Concern than there used to be.

‘ At the latter end of the Year 1733. there appeared a very  
 ‘ unusual flexibleness, and yielding to Advice, in our young  
 ‘ People. It had been too long their manner to make the  
 ‘ *Evening after the Sabbath* \*, and after our publick *Lecture*,  
 ‘ to be especially the Times of their *Mirth*, and Company

\* It must be noted, that it has never been our Manner, to observe the *Evening* that follows the Sabbath; but that which precedes it, as Part of holy Time.

keeping. But a *Sermon* was now preached on the Sabbath before the *Lecture*, to shew the *Evil Tendency* of the Practice, and to persuade them to reform it ; and it was urged on *Heads of Families*, that it should be a thing agreed upon among them to govern their Families, and keep their Children at home, at these times ; and withal it was more privately moved, that they should meet together, the next Day, in their several Neighbourhoods, to know each other's Minds, which was accordingly done, and the *Motion* complied with throughout the Town. But *Parents* found little, or no occasion for the exercise of Government in the Case : the young *People* declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the *Pulpit*, and were willing of themselves to comply with the Counsel that had been given : and it was immediately, and, I suppose, almost universally complied with ; and there was a thorough *Reformation* of these Disorders thenceforward, which has continued ever since.

Presently after this, there began to appear a remarkable Religious Concern at a little Village, belonging to the Congregation, call'd *Pascommuck*, where a few Families were settled, at about three Miles distance from the main Body of the Town. At this place, a number of Persons seemed to be savingly wrought upon. In the April following, Anna 1734, there happen'd a very sudden and awful Death of a young Man, in the Bloom of his Youth ; who being violently seized with a *Pleurisy*, and taken immediately very delirious, died in about two Days ; which ( together with what was preached publicly on that Occasion ) much affected many young People. This was followed with another Death of a young married Woman, who had been considerably exercised in Mind, about the Salvation of her Soul, before she was ill, and was in great Distress, in the beginning of her Illness ; but seemed to have satisfying Evidences of God's saving Mercy to her, before her Death ; so that she died very full of Comfort, in a most earnest and moving Manner warning, and counselling others. This seem'd much to contribute to the solemnizing of the Spirits of many young Persons : and there began evidently to appear more of a Religious Concern on People's Minds.

In the Fall of the Year, I propos'd it to the young People, that they should agree among themselves to spend the Evenings after Lectures in social Religion, and to that end divide

vide themselves into several Companies to meet in various parts of the Town ; which was accordingly done, and those *Meetings* have been since continued, and the *Example* imitated by *elder* People. This was follow'd with the Death of an *elderly* Person, which was attended with many *unusual* Circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected.

About this time, began the great *Noise* that was in this Part of the Country, about *Arminianism*, which seemed to appear with a very *threatning* Aspect upon the Interest of Religion here. The Friends of vital Piety trembled for fear of the issue ; but it seemed, contrary to their Fear, strongly to be *over-ruled* for the promoting of Religion. Many who looked on themselves as in a *Christless* Condition, seemed to be awaken'd by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the Land, and that we should be given up to *Heterodoxy*, and corrupt Principles ; and that then their *Opportunity* for obtaining Salvation would be past ; and many who were brought a little to *doubt* about the *Truth* of the *Doctrines* they had hitherto been taught, seem'd to have a kind of a trembling *Fear* with their Doubts, lest they should be led into *By-paths*, to their eternal undoing : And they seem'd with much Concern and Engagedness of Mind, to enquire what was indeed the Way in which they must come to be accepted with God. There were then some things said *publicly* on that Occasion, concerning *Justification* by *Faith alone*.

Altho' great *Fault* was found with *meddling* with the *Controversy* in the Pulpit, by such a Person, and at that Time, and tho' it was ridiculed by many *elsewhere* ; yet it proved a Word spoken in season here ; and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable *Blessing* of Heaven to the Souls of the People in this Town. They received thence a general Satisfaction with respect to the main Thing in Question, which they had been in trembling Doubts and Concern about ; and their Minds were engag'd the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God, and saved in the Way of the Gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only Way. And then it was, in the latter Part of *December*, that the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to set in, and wonderfully to work amongst us ; and there were, very suddenly, one after another,



‘ another, *five* or *six* Persons, who were to all Appearance  
 ‘ savingly converted, and some of them wrought upon in a  
 ‘ very remarkable Manner.

‘ Particularly, I was surprized with the Relation of a *young*  
 ‘ *Woman*, who had been one of the greatest Company-Keepers  
 ‘ in the whole Town : When she came to me, I had never  
 ‘ heard that she was become in any wise serious, but by the  
 ‘ Conversation I then had with her, it appeared to me, that  
 ‘ what she gave an Account of, was a glorious Work of  
 ‘ God’s infinite Power and sovereign Grace ; and that God  
 ‘ had given her a *new* Heart, truly broken and sanctified. I  
 ‘ could not then doubt of it, and have seen much in my Ac-  
 ‘ quaintance with her since to confirm it.

‘ Tho’ the Work was *glorious*, yet I was filled with Con-  
 ‘ cern about the *Effect* it might have upon others : I was  
 ‘ ready to conclude (tho’ too rashly) that some would be  
 ‘ *harden’d* by it, in Carelessness and Looseness of Life ; and  
 ‘ and would take Occasion from it to open their Mouths, in  
 ‘ *Reproaches* of Religion. But the *Event* was the *Reverse*,  
 ‘ to a wonderful Degree ; God made it, I suppose, the  
 ‘ *greatest Occasion of Awakening* to others, of any Thing that  
 ‘ ever came to pass in the Town. I have had abundant Op-  
 ‘ portunity to know the Effect it had, by my private Con-  
 ‘ versation with many. The News of it seemed to be almost  
 ‘ like a *Flash of Lightning*, upon the Hearts of young People,  
 ‘ all over the Town, and upon many others. Those Per-  
 ‘ sons amongst us, who used to be *farthest* from Seriousness,  
 ‘ and that I most feared would make an ill Improvement of  
 ‘ it, seemed greatly to be *awakened* with it ; many went to talk  
 ‘ with her, concerning what she had met with ; and what  
 ‘ appeared in her seemed to be to the Satisfaction of all  
 ‘ that did so.

‘ Presently upon this, a great and earnest Concern about  
 ‘ the great Things of Religion, and the eternal World, be-  
 ‘ came *universal* in all Parts of the Town, and among Per-  
 ‘ sons of all Ages ; the Noise among the *dry Bones* waxed  
 ‘ louder and louder : All other Talk but about spiritual and  
 ‘ eternal Things, was soon thrown by ; all the Conversation  
 ‘ in all Companies, and upon all Occasions, was upon these  
 ‘ Things only, unless so much as was necessary for People,  
 ‘ carrying on their ordinary secular Business. Other Dis-  
 ‘ course than of the Things of Religion, would scarcely be  
 ‘ tolerated

' tolerated in any Company. The Minds of People were  
 ' wonderfully taken off from the *World*, it was treated a-  
 ' mongst us as a Thing of very little Consequence : They  
 ' seem'd to follow their worldly Business, more as a Part of  
 ' their Duty, than from any Disposition they had to it ; the  
 ' *Temptation* now seem'd to lie on that Hand, to neglect worldly  
 ' Affairs too much, and to spend too much Time in the im-  
 ' mediate Exercise of Religion : Which Thing was exceed-  
 ' ingly misrepresented by Reports that were spread in distant  
 ' Parts of the Land, as tho' the People here had wholly thrown  
 ' by all worldly Business, and betook themselves entirely to  
 ' reading and praying, and such like religious Exercises.

' But altho' People did not ordinarily neglect their worldly  
 ' Business ; yet there then was the Reverse of what com-  
 ' monly is : *Religion* was with all Sorts the great Concern,  
 ' and the *World* was a Thing only by the by. The only  
 ' Thing in their View was to get the Kingdom of Heaven,  
 ' and every one appeared pressing into it : The Engagedness  
 ' of their Hearts in this great Concern cou'd not be hid, it  
 ' appear'd in their very *Countenances*. It then was a dreadful  
 ' Thing amongst us to lie out of Christ, in Danger every  
 ' Day of dropping into Hell ; and what Persons Minds were  
 ' intent upon was to *escape for their Lives*, and to *fly from*  
 ' *the Wrath to come*. All would eagerly lay hold of Oppor-  
 ' tunities for their Souls ; and were wont very often to meet  
 ' together in private Houses for religious Purposes : And such  
 ' Meetings when appointed were wont greatly to be  
 ' thronged.

' There was scarcely a single Person in the Town, either  
 ' old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great  
 ' Things of the eternal World. Those that were wont to be  
 ' the vainest, and loosest, and those that had been most dis-  
 ' posed to think, and speak slightly of vital and experimental  
 ' Religion, were now generally subject to great Awakenings.  
 ' And the Work of *Conversion* was carried on in a most *asto-*  
 ' *nishing* Manner, and increased more and more ; Souls  
 ' did as it were come by Flocks to Jesus Christ. From Day  
 ' to Day, for many Months together, might be seen evident  
 ' Instances of Sinners brought out of *Darkness into marvelous*  
 ' *Light*, and delivered out of an horrible Pit, and from the  
 ' miry Clay, and set upon a Rock, with a new Song of Praise  
 ' to God in their Mouths.

' This

' This Work of God, as it was carried on, and the Num-  
 ' ber of true Saints multiplied, soon made a glorious Altera-  
 ' tion in the Town ; so that in the Spring and Summer fol-  
 ' lowing, *Anno 1735.* the Town seemed to be full of the  
 ' Presence of God : It never was so full of *Love*, nor so full  
 ' of *Joy* ; and yet so full of Distress, as it was then. There  
 ' were remarkable Tokens of God's Presence in almost every  
 ' House. It was a Time of Joy in *Families* on the Account  
 ' of Salvation's being brought unto them ; *Parents* rejoicing  
 ' over their Children as new born, and *Husbands* over their  
 ' *Wives*, and *Wives* over their Husbands. *The Goings of*  
 ' *God* were then *seen in his Sanctuary*, God's Day was a  
 ' *Delight*, and his *Tabernacles* were *amiable*. Our publick  
 ' *Assemblies* were then beautiful ; the Congregation was *alive*  
 ' in God's Service, every one earnestly intent on the public  
 ' Worship, every *Hearer* eager to drink in the Words of  
 ' the *Minister* as they came from his Mouth ; the Assembly  
 ' in general were from Time to Time, in *Tears* while the  
 ' Word was preached ; *some* weeping with Sorrow and Dis-  
 ' tress, *others* with Joy and Love, *others* with Pity and Con-  
 ' cern for the Souls of their Neighbours.

' Our public *Praises* were then greatly enliven'd ; God  
 ' was then served in our *Psalmody*, in some Measure, in the  
 ' *Beauty of Holiness*. It has been observable, that there has  
 ' been scarce any Part of divine Worship, wherein good Men  
 ' amongst us have had *Grace so drawn forth*, and their Hearts  
 ' *so lifted up* in the Ways of God, as in *singing his Praises* :  
 ' Our Congregation excell'd all that ever I knew in the ex-  
 ' ternal Part of the Duty before, generally carrying regularly,  
 ' and well, *three Parts of Musick*, and the *Women* a Part by  
 ' themselves : But now they were evidently wont to sing with  
 ' *unusual Elevation of Heart and Voice*, which made the Duty  
 ' pleasant indeed.

( *To be finished, and go on with other Accounts in our next.* )

Just Reprinted, and Sold by Kneeland and Green,  
 Sinners in the Hands of an angry GOD. A Sermon  
 Preached at Enfield, July 8. 1741. At a Time of great Awak-  
 nings ; and attended with remarkable Impressions on many of the  
 Hearers. By JONATHAN EDWARDS, A M. Pastor of the Church  
 in Northampton.

Dr. Watt's in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Prince, April 22. 1742, says,  
 ' I think Mr. Edwards's Sermon on the Danger of the Unconverted,  
 ' is one of the most terrible Representations I ever read.'